VERMONT . . .
KEEPING IN TOUCH
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Vermont State Program Unit Does Stream Work on the Dog River

On September 29 and 30, the EPA's Vermont State Program Unit participated in its second annual community outreach trip to Vermont. The unit traveled to the Dog River Natural Area in West Berlin and helped install tree revetments along the river. The project was a true community effort with participation from the Berlin Conservation Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Vermont Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, students from a local high school and a Berlin landowner who generously donated the trees used for the project. Three people from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services also joined the effort to gain a better understanding of the technique and its potential technology transfer to streams in New Hampshire.

The work involved the stabilization of approximately 300 feet of the river bank by anchoring evergreen trees to the streambank with steel cables; the trees will trap sediment and debris and protect the bank from erosion. Vegetative planting scheduled for next spring will compliment the revetment work. This revetment technique is innovative because it is more economical than traditional projects that use rip rap and is less disruptive to the environment. In addition to the "people power" contributed by the Vermont Unit, the project provided an pleasant opportunity for EPA staff to learn new techniques and develop a stronger appreciation for community needs.

Rolling trees into place on the Dog River

What's All the Fuss About TMDLs?

Over the past several years, the EPA and the states have been paying increased attention to a provision of the federal Clean Water Act that requires the establishment of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for certain waters. What exactly is a TMDL? Why is it in the news now? And what does it mean for Vermont? This article will try to answer these questions. First a little background.

The 1972 Clean Water Act required EPA and the states to issue permits telling point source dischargers (such as wastewater treatment plants) what technologies to use to reduce pollution. Section 303(d) then required each state to identify waters for which these national, technology-based requirements were not stringent enough to achieve water quality standards. States were then required to prioritize these waters and to develop a TMDL for each water body identifying additional point and nonpoint source pollution controls necessary to comply with standards.

Most of the country spent the last 25 years implementing the technology-based requirements, often with great success. Federal, state and local governments invested more than $66 billion in municipal wastewater treatment. Vermont has focused on the technology-based approach as well, although significant effort has also gone into nonpoint source controls on agricultural lands. Although water quality has definitely improved, many waterways are still impaired, even after technology-based point source improvements have been fully implemented. It is for this type of situation that the TMDL provisions of the act were intended.

What is a TMDL? A TMDL is a tool for implementing state water quality standards. A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that may be introduced into a water body while ensuring attainment of water quality standards. It is based on the relationship between pollution sources and in-stream water quality conditions. A TMDL must take into consideration seasonal variability, and provide for a margin of safety that accounts for the uncertainty of how pollutant loadings may impact receiving water quality. However, a TMDL is more than just the maximum allowable pollutant loading; it also must specify pollutant load allocations among sources.

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Underground Storage Tank Deadline

An important regulatory deadline is coming up quickly for owners of underground storage tanks (USTs). **By December 22, 1998**, owners or operators of USTs that store petroleum and hazardous substances will have to ensure that their tank systems (including underground piping) are protected against corrosion, have equipment that prevents spills and overfills, and are monitored at least once a week for leaks. New petroleum systems and all hazardous substance tanks and piping must also have leak detection systems that include secondary containment (for example, double-walled tanks) with weekly interstitial monitoring (detecting leaks in the space between the outer and inner walls). If these standards are not met, the USTs will have to be taken out-of-service, and then be permanently closed (removed from the ground) within 12 months of being taken out-of-service. How can a tank owner meet these standards? Existing tank systems either can be replaced with new protected systems or be upgraded. Upgrading means bringing the tank and piping up to current standards. It may be more cost effective to replace tanks with new systems rather than to upgrade old ones, but this is a decision each owner must carefully evaluate.

These requirements are a key element in state and federal efforts to prevent groundwater contamination, as 50% of the U.S. population relies on groundwater as its source of drinking water; in Vermont, greater than 60% rely on groundwater. Leaks from substandard, bare steel tanks and piping cause much of the contamination in the groundwater, and petroleum is reported to be the most common contaminant. In 1997, Vermont supplied more than 38,000 gallons of bottled water to people whose drinking water was contaminated by leaking USTs. Most of the known hazardous waste sites in Vermont are the result of petroleum product leaking from underground tanks. These USTs are also responsible for contaminating soils and surface waters, and for producing vapors in indoor air. Gasoline vapors can migrate into basements and garages, and potentially cause explosions or fires, which result in loss of life and in costly property damage.

To facilitate voluntary compliance with the 1998 deadline requirements, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation decided to undertake an intensive outreach and education project, with some financial assistance from EPA. This involved state inspectors making personal visits to each of the tank owners that the state database showed still had bare steel tanks or piping, and discussing their options for replacing or upgrading their tanks, placing special emphasis on the deadline date. They explained the no-interest loan program for tank replacement that some owners can take advantage of, and distributed outreach literature on tank upgrades, tank replacement, and proper tank closure procedures. This outreach project was the latest in a long-term effort by the DEC to educate and remind tank owners of the UST requirements through numerous mailings and workshops.

A new steel tank is being installed in a lined excavation, a type of secondary containment.

The workload on UST system contractors will increase as the deadline approaches, and this will certainly overwhelm the capacity of the contractors to upgrade or replace UST systems. As a result, owners and operators may experience prolonged periods of time with their tanks out-of-service, and contractor costs will increase as the demand for their services increases. Once December 22, 1998 passes in Vermont, however, owners of existing bare steel UST systems will not be allowed to add corrosion protection. They will have to close their tanks. The Vermont UST Program is continuing to work with UST owners and operators to encourage compliance in advance of the deadline, but will pursue enforcement against any owners who ignore these requirements after this date. **For more information on the deadline, or any other UST issues, call the Vermont UST Program at 802-241-3888.**

Burlington Receives EMPACT Monitoring Grant

The City of Burlington, in partnership with the University of Vermont, the Lake Champlain Science Center and Green Mountain Institute for Environmental Democracy, recently received a $500,000 grant from EPA to support a new air and beach monitoring program. This project will provide the means, methodology and structure for a community-based environmental monitoring, processing and delivery system. This is one of eleven projects in New England selected for funding under EPA's competitive Environmental Monitoring and Public Access through Community Tracking (EMPACT) program. *Congratulations* to the applicants!

The People Corner

New Nonpoint Source Coordinator Added to the Vermont State Program Unit

Last spring, the Vermont State Program Unit welcomed Eric Perkins to the group as the new nonpoint source coordinator. Eric will be responsible for the nonpoint source pollution program in Vermont. Eric worked previously as the technical coordinator at the Lake Champlain Basin Program Office in Grand Isle, VT. He coordinated the small grants program, State of the Lake Report, and many other activities. Eric has a B.A. in Geography from McGill University, an M.S. in Geography from UMass at Amherst, and an M.S. in Environmental Studies with a concentration in water resources from Yale University.

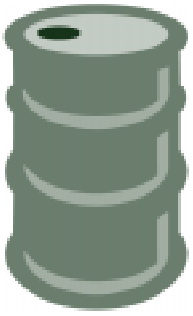
Watershed Program Transition

As many of you know, Lee Steppacher has worked on the Lake Champlain Basin Program for over six years. She has provided constant hard work, dedication and leadership to the program. During 1999, Lee will be moving more into watershed planning activities and will be working on projects across the state. Her new responsibilities will include the clean water action plan (see page 9), basin planning, watershed assistance, training, and other activities.

Sarah Blackman recently joined the Vermont State Program Unit as the new Lake Champlain Coordinator. Sarah worked in EPA's Region III (Philadelphia, PA) Water Protection Division for over five years. There she was the nonpoint source coordinator for Delaware and Pennsylvania. She also has extensive experience in approving states' lists of impaired water segments and in the total maximum daily load program. Sarah graduated from Binghamton University with a B.A. in English with a minor in Environmental Studies. Sarah will be making the transition to the Lake Champlain Basin Program over the next several months.

Vermont - International Trans-Boundary Response Planning

Being prepared to respond to oil spills or hazardous substance releases in New England means coordination with the state counterparts in environmental response, public health and emergency management. Lake Champlain is one area which brings in the need for multi-jurisdictional planning. For a number of years the states of Vermont and New York and the province of Quebec have conducted oil spill and chemical release exercises to bring together the local, state and federal agencies that would be at the scene of a spill or release impacting this area.



In 1994, the EPA developed a national plan with Environment Canada, called the Canada-United States Joint Inland Pollution Contingency Plan which uses the U.S. National Response System as a basis for conducting joint operations in the event that an incident would or could impact the other country. Annexes are to be developed to cover smaller areas. For the last year, EPA New England, EPA Region II (New York and New Jersey) and Environment Canada have been developing the CANUSQUE annex to the plan to cover the Quebec border. The first steps have been looking at how the U.S. and Canadian response systems operate, conducting a hazards analyses of industry within 10 kilometers of the border, and developing a draft plan to work out the issue. By the end of the year we hope to have the CANUSQUE annex completed and have a better response capability for the northern boundary.

Questions on the CANUSQUE Annex can be made to Dennisses Valdés at EPA's Emergency Response Section at (617) 918-1261.

New Wetlands Bioassessment Project

Congratulations to the VT Department of Environmental Conservation and the VT Fish and Wildlife Department for their recent award to begin work on the bioassessment of Vermont's wetlands. The funds will be used to develop, among other things, protocols for standardized sampling of biological communities and chemical attributes of the state's wetlands.

Wetlands bioassessment is the identification of plant or animal species, communities of species and ecological processes that can be used to indicate the ecological integrity, or "health", of a wetland. Measuring the biological integrity of a wetland will allow scientists to determine if the wetland is degraded by any chemical, physical, or biological stressor. Wetland bioassessments, combined with functional assessments, provide wetland professionals with a tool to more accurately characterize the current condition of a wetland and predict changes that may result from human activities.

Biological integrity is "the ability of an aquatic ecosystem to support and maintain a balanced adaptive community of organisms having a species composition diversity and functional organization comparable to that of natural habitats within a region." from Karr, J.R.and D.R. Dudley 1981 Ecological perspective on water quality goals. *Environmental Management* 5:55-68

Biological assessments can detect the effects of the following stressors:

- Toxic levels of metals and other chemicals
- Changes to physical and chemical characteristics of water (e.g., pH, temperatures, dissolved oxygen
- Enrichment of nutrients
- Physical changes to habitat
- Alteration of the flow and quantity of water
- Impacts from introduced plants and animals
- Effects of changes in land use within watershed such as fragmentation of natural habitats within a watershed or increased runoff from logging or impervious surfaces
- Cumulative impacts of multiple stressor
- Long-term effects of chronic stressors

The long-term goal of Vermont is to identify appropriate biological communities and ecological processes that can serve as indicators for analyzing the ecological character of wetlands in Vermont. We wish them good luck with this important and challenging work.

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On November 2, Barbara McGonagle and Marelyn Toro from the Vermont State Program Unit, demonstrated the EPA's WAVE-Saver program at the annual Vermont Lodging and Restaurant Trade Show at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Burlington. WAVE (Water Alliances for Voluntary Efficiency) is an interactive, PC-based software tool that enables hotel maintenance staff to survey water use and identify water-saving opportunities such as low flow toilets and showerheads.

Governor Howard Dean led the kickoff of this event, which had 150 booths displaying the latest products and services for the hotel/motel industry. Eleven hundred visitors attended the day-long show. The Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center was recently designated the first "Green Hotel in the Green Mountain State" by the Vermont Business Environmental Partnership for environmentally friendly management practices such as solid and hazardous waste reduction, and energy and water reduction. There are 13 other green hotels in Vermont. The partnership is a voluntary, technical assistance and business recognition program sponsored by the Environmental Assistance Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

For further information on the WAVE-Saver Program, contact Barbara McGonagle at (617) 918-1608.

Barbara McGonagle with Governor Dean at the annual Vermont Lodging and Restaurant Trade Show

New Wetlands Bioassement (continued from previous page)

Related to this effort....

EPA New England and the New England Interstate Control Commission (NEIWPCC) have jointly developed a project entitled "Biological Assessment of Wetlands: New England Regional Project Work Plan." This is a multi-year effort with the New England states to develop state-wide biological monitoring programs for wetlands. To assist in this effort, EPA is offering a long-term technical training curriculum for state wetland and water quality staffs. The courses will teach biologists the following:

Large Vernal Pool Complex in Vermont

1) How to identify and select reference sites;
2) How to catalog and inventory information;
3) How to develop metrics and validate them, develop, understand and apply an "index of biological integrity" and;
4) How to develop techniques in data management, storage and use.

EPA New England will also develop regional conferences on wetland biomonitoring/biological assessment, cooperatively with the Society of Wetlands Scientist in New England and state wetland scientists and other related professional associations to educate and showcase ongoing state projects and to begin developing region-wide wetlands biomonitoring network. The regional conference is tentatively planned for March of 1999.

EPA national wetland bioassessment fact sheets as well as other wetland information resources are available by calling the EPA Wetlands Information Hotline at 1-800-832-7828 or you can visit the Wetlands Division home page at **http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/wetlands**. In early 1999 EPA New England will have updates on the New England project at **http://www.epa.gov/regionI**.

Watershed Assistance Grants from River Network

The EPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, & Watersheds recently awarded River Network $300,000 to distribute grants to local watershed partnerships to support organizational development and long term effectiveness. River Network, a national organization based in Portland, Oregon, supports river and watershed advocates at the local, state, and regional levels to build effective partnerships and organizations. The Watershed Assistance Grants Program will distribute grants ranging from $2,000 to $30,000 in 1999 to support watershed partnerships working to protect and restore their watersheds. Grant applications will be available after December 1, 1998. To request an application, please write to River Network, Watershed Assistance Grants Program, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207, or email River Network at info@rivernetwork.org. For more information, visit their webpage at http://rivernetwork.org.

Individuals from Academia, government and nonprofit organizations recently completed a paper entitled, **"Mercury Deposition and Ambient Concentrations of Mercury in New England: Results of a Hybrid MDN and MIC-B Network**." Results for gas and particle phase mercury for the long-term monitoring site in the Proctor Maple Research Center (Underhill, Vermont) and the two other Regional Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Program (REMAP) sponsored sites are presented. Plans for continued efforts are outlined, including mountain cloud water (Mount Mansfield, VT) and coastal fog mercury measurements (Great Bay Estuary, NH). University of Vermont, University of Michigan, Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management, and an individual who works for the EPA collaborated on this paper. This paper represents the views of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the EPA. For further information about this paper, please contact Alan VanArsdale at (781) 860-4610.

Check out EPA's home page at: **http://www.epa.gov/region01**

Source Water Assessment Program

EPA and Vermont are working together to implement a new initiative to improve the quality of drinking water sources. The new effort, called the Source Water Assessment Program, affects all public water supplies, from both ground water and surface water, and was mandated by Congress in the 1996 revisions to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The program is designed to locate and examine the source of the water, whether it is pumped from a well, or drawn from a river or lake, and locate and assess the threats to the quality of this water.

This new effort builds on and adds to the water protection efforts of the past; it does not replace them. The federal government has for many years required states to protect their public wells through the Wellhead Protection Program, and has encouraged protection of surface water sources by a variety of mechanisms. The State has done a good job implementing these federal requirements, and has implemented some additional protection initiatives beyond them. However, the Source Water Assessment Program will assist the state in extending their current protection efforts by providing additional tools and funds for the assessment and protection of drinking water sources.

This new program requires the state to create a plan to examine all public drinking water sources in Vermont. The scope of land needed to protect each of these sources will be determined (or revised, as needed). The potential sources of contamination in and near this land area will be located and evaluated for their risk. This work, in most cases, will be done by water suppliers with assistance from the state. In some cases the state will do these evaluations. This examination of the drinking water sources will help authorities understand the possible existing and future sources of contamination to water supplies, and provide them with the information needed to take steps to protect those supplies.

As part of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants from EPA, the State of Vermont received over $1.2 million dollars in September, 1997 to help pay the cost of these assessments. From a later EPA grant, Vermont will make available $534,000 to municipal water systems as loans to acquire land and easements around water supplies.

While the revisions to federal law that created the Source Water Assessment Program do not require that the states take the result of the assessments and use them to protect surface and ground watersheds, it is expected that Vermont will use these assessments in their ongoing protection efforts.

The State of Vermont has released a draft of its assessment plan, and has taken public comment. This plan is due to be finalized and sent to EPA for approval in February, 1999. This draft plan is available from Vermont's Water Supply Division, and is also available on the Agency of Natural Resources' website (http://www.anr.state.vt.us). The public has been involved with crafting the draft plan, and involvement in the implementation of the plan is encouraged. For further information please contact Erik Beck at (617) 918-1606.

Update on Connecticut River Activities

In 1997, EPA New England decided to focus particular attention and resources on the Upper Connecticut River (from its headwaters just below the Canadian border in Pittsburg, NH to the Massachusetts border) by naming it a "special place." This choice was made partly because of the outstanding resource this river is for recreational and economic needs, and the quality of its habitat for flora and fauna. Another reason the selection was made is because of the amazing work the Connecticut River Joint Commissions did to produce a blueprint for taking care of the river. The "Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan," discusses the improvement in environmental quality over the last 30 years, along with the river's remaining problems and how to fix them.

The challenges outlined in the plan include: reducing bank erosion and its consequent turbidity and siltation; reducing the contamination that has led to a fish consumption advisory (a statewide advisory is in place, and in other New England states as well); identifying and cleaning toxic hot spots; returning the flow characteristics of the river to a more natural state while keeping the large dams in place; making the river safe for swimming at all times and in all places; improving the habitat for the native flora and fauna while reducing the impact of invasive species; improving the resident and anadromous (fish that live in the sea and return to fresh water to spawn) fisheries and fishing opportunities.

Representatives of the Vermont and New Hampshire State Units at the EPA began working with the Joint Commissions to respond to the issues and challenges raised in its management plan. In October of 1997, this work led to a meeting between members of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, state officials from New Hampshire and Vermont, and the New England

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Update on Connecticut River (continued from previous page...)

Federal Partners for Natural Resources — a coalition of federal agencies that work together on restoring and enhancing the environment of New England. The attendees heard a presentation of the management plan and then broke up into topical groups to further discuss the challenges of maintaining and improving the river's ability to sustain humans, fish, plants, birds, and other species. The Federal Partners website is the following: http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/environm/cafed.html.

As a result of that meeting, these groups have evolved into four action teams, each of which meet regularly to brainstorm, prioritize, analyze, and implement the issues presented in the management plan, as well as other natural resource problems that may arise. The four groups include the following:

Fisheries, Wildlife, and their Habitats;

Flow and Floodplains;

Water Quality Monitoring;

Non-point Sources and Riparian Buffers.

They are comprised of members of the Joint Commissions, New Hamshire and Vermont state officials, and federal agency representatives. Together the group has been laying the groundwork for cooperation between government agencies and local interests, analyzing a range of problems and possible fixes and have begun taking steps to remedy environmental issues on the river. This past summer, the water quality team worked together to identify ten river bottom sites to sample for chemical contamination. We hope to have the results of the lab work from this sampling in early January, 1999.

John DeVillars, US Fish and Wildlife Service,Connecticut River Joint Commissions, Nature Conservancy representatives at the Fourth Connecticut Lake in New Hampshire.

This past summer, EPA New England Administrator John DeVillars, took a three-day tour along the Upper Connecticut River. He was accompanied by members of the Joint Commissions, officials from Vermont and New Hampshire state agencies, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, US Fish and Wildlife Staff, and EPA staff. During this fact-finding visit, DeVillars met with members of the Joint Commissions, visited streambank restoration sites, talked with farmers about their work to reduce pollution to the river from livestock, and became better acquainted with the issues and values of the river. During the trip, EPA announced the awarding of more than $164,000 in federal funds for environmental projects along the Upper Connecticut River. For example, EPA awarded $25,000 of this money to the Connecticut River Joint Commissions to assist with implementing the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan as well as a recently completed flow policy study. This flow study, which EPA helped to fund, seeks to develop a better understanding of the many uses and values dependent upon river flows. It also assesses the opportunities for improved coordination between Vermont and New Hampshire on policies that affect flows in the upper reaches of the Connecticut River.

During the tour, the Connecticut River had the good fortune of being announced as an American Heritage River by President Clinton. This designation means that the attention being paid the river by federal agencies, including the New England Federal Partners, will increase, not just to the upper river, but south of the Massachusetts-Vermont-New Hampshire border. This designation provides a mechanism for the federal government to better coordinate existing services and allocate current resources to work on problems facing this river. It does not provide any new money, nor does it provide the federal government with any authority to regulate or acquire land. The work being done as an EPA "special place" will be folded into the work of the Heritage River initiative.

The designation as a heritage river will bring a dedicated federal employee called a "navigator" to work the entire length of the Connecticut River. This navigator will work as the official US Government liaison to local communities along the river, and will work with state and federal agencies, local individuals, and local interest groups to help implement projects to enhance the natural and social functioning of the river. The navigator will serve as a catalyst for local towns and interest groups to accomplish their restoration and improvement goals for the river and its communities.

For more information about the Connecticut River, contact Erik Beck at (617) 918-1606.

EPA Continues to Make Progress at Vermont Superfund Sites

During the past year EPA New England has made significant progress at a number of its Superfund sites in the State of Vermont. More specifically, EPA made remedy decisions at the Pine Street, Burgess Brothers and Bennington Landfill Sites. EPA also reached a settlement with two of the potentially responsible parties at the Tansitor Electronics Site in Bennington. Also, the Pownal Tannery Site was proposed for listing on the National Priority List, which makes the site eligible for federal Superfund dollars. With the addition of the Pownal Tannery Site, there are currently nine Superfund sites listed in Vermont.

Pine Street Canal Superfund Site

EPA has officially adopted a $4.38 million cleanup plan for the Pine Street Canal Site in Burlington. The plan was developed in collaboration with the Pine Street Barge Canal Coordinating Council. The cleanup plan includes the capping of canal sediments that present the highest risk to the environment, covering several wetland areas of contaminated soil and sediment near the canal, and long term monitoring and institutional controls for groundwater and land use development. The potentially responsible parties are expected to begin remedial design this winter. EPA expects the cap construction to begin during the spring/summer of the year 2000.

Additionally, as a result of the Coordinating Council process, the companies who are responsible for the contamination at the canal have voluntarily agreed to fund additional environmental projects that will benefit Lake Champlain and the Burlington area. These companies–led by Green Mountain Power Corporation, but also including other landowners at the Pine Street Site–have agreed to contribute approximately $3 million in projects for improvement in the environmental conditions in Englesby Brook, funding for the University of Vermont Lake Studies Center and other projects.

Burgess Bros. Superfund Site

A $3.6 million cleanup plan, which is expected to be paid by the parties EPA has identified as responsible for the contamination, was approved by EPA for the three-acre Burgess Brothers Landfill Site located in the towns of Bennington and Woodford. The plan calls for capping the landfill, capping nearby marsh area soils, treating two hot spots near a former disposal lagoon, replicating wetlands that will be impacted by cap construction activities, and maintaining institutional controls and long term monitoring. The cap construction is scheduled to begin in the spring and EPA expects it to be complete and the treatment systems to be fully operational by the fall.

Bennington Landfill Superfund Site

Construction of a multi-layer cap over the 15-acre Bennington Municipal Landfill that began last May was nearly completed this November. This cap consists of six protective layers, including a six inch top soil layer that will be seeded with grass to control erosion.

In July 1997, EPA reached an $8 million agreement with the town of Bennington and 18 other parties to construct the cap and a wastewater collection and treatment system. The wastewater system has been operating since December of 1997.

This year, EPA New England decided that no further cleanup for the groundwater portion of the Bennington Landfill was necessary. In making this determination EPA took into account the substantial cleanup already performed at the site, that groundwater is not used as a drinking water source, that local water supplies were not affected by the landfill, and that groundwater would not adversely impact aquatic species.

Tansitor Electronics Superfund Site

EPA has reached a settlement agreement with two of the potentially responsible parties – Tansitor Electronics, Inc. and Siemens Communication Systems Inc — at the Tansitor Electronics Site in Bennington. As part of this settlement these parties agreed to perform a limited cleanup at the site. This work will include implementation of institutional controls to prevent the use of groundwater, long term monitoring and implementing contingencies should long term monitoring indicate that contamination is migrating.

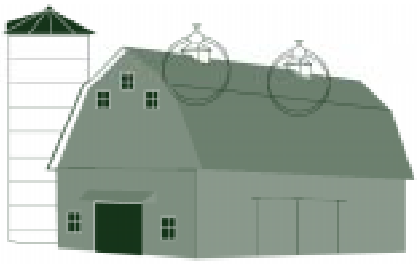
Pownal Tannery Superfund Site

In September the Pownal Tannery Site, which is located in the Village of North Pownal in Bennington County, was proposed for inclusion on the National Priority List of federal superfund sites. The site was a former hide tanning and finishing facility owned by the Pownal Tanning Company, Inc. and has been inactive since 1988 when the company ceased operations and declared bankruptcy. The site consists of three contamination sources: the tannery building complex, a lagoon system, and the tannery's sludge landfill. The EPA just proposed a cleanup plan for a portion of the site this December.

National Clean Water Action Plan Brings More Dollars to Vermont

Last February President Clinton and Vice President Gore announced a new Clean Water Action Plan to restore and protect U.S. waters. The plan seeks to build on the successes of the first 25 years of the Clean Water Act, and calls for $2.3 billion in new resources to support the initiative over the next five years. The plan emphasizes 1) the watershed approach, and 2) strengthening core water quality programs.

So how will this plan affect Vermont? Perhaps the most noticeable change is that the amount of EPA nonpoint source funding to Vermont will be doubled (to approximately $1.5 million) for fiscal year 1999 and hopefully for subsequent years as well. These funds, which are administered by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation, are intended for projects or activities that result in measurable reductions in nonpoint source pollution discharges within priority watersheds (see below). A portion of this funding will be available to local groups through application to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for projects supporting the state's priorities.



Another section of the Clean Water Action Plan asks states to prepare Unified Watershed Assessments that draw on all available data to prioritize watersheds for restoration. In Vermont the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Agency of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets collaborated on this project and submitted the Unified Watershed Assessment to EPA by the October 1 deadline. Based on the VT Department of Environmental Conservation's list of impaired waters and other information, the Unified Watershed Assessment places Vermont watersheds into four categories:

Category I -	Watersheds in Need of Restoration
Category II -	Watersheds Meeting Goals and Needing Preventive Action
Category III -	Watersheds with Pristine or SensitiveAquatic Systems
Category IV -	Watersheds with Insufficient Data to Make An Assessment

The additional funds described above are intended to be spent in Category I watersheds, which are the top priority for restoration. Category I watersheds are defined as watersheds that do not now meet, or face imminent threat of not meeting, clean water and other natural resource goals. Please contact Lee Steppacher at (617) 918-1607 for further information.

What's All the Fuss About TMDLs? *continued from page 1*

Why are TMDLs in the news these days? The Clean Water Act requires states to submit their 303(d) "lists" of impaired waters biennially and TMDLs, upon completion, to the EPA for approval. Impaired waters are any waters that do not attain water quality standards (including designated uses and narrative and numeric criteria). During the past several years, implementation of the 303(d) requirements has been the focus of numerous lawsuits filed by environmental advocacy groups. Since 1984, there have been 32 separate TMDL-related lawsuits (including several recent "notices of intent to sue") filed against the EPA for such reasons as failure to procure lists or approving inadequate lists. These lawsuits, combined with EPA's desire to solve the nation's remaining water quality problems, have been a driving force in the EPA's renewed interest in section 303(d). In recent years states have stepped up their efforts to produce lists of impaired waters, identify priorities for TMDL development, and actually develop TMDLs.

What does all this mean for Vermont? The VT Department of Environmental Conservation has been submitting lists of impaired waters to the EPA biennially since 1992. However this year's list has received increased scrutiny from the public, environmental groups, and the EPA. Consequently, the VT Department of Environmental Conservation has produced multiple drafts of this year's list with a final list expected in December, 1998. The EPA is continuing to work closely with the VT Department of Environmental Conservation to insure the list of impaired waters meets the EPA's regulations and guidance. Vermont is also home to a major TMDL effort for Lake Champlain. The VT Department of Environmental Conservation is preparing the Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL to control and allocate phosphorus loads to Lake Champlain from point and nonpoint sources in Vermont, New York and Quebec. This TMDL is based on the 1996 Lake Champlain plan *Opportunities for Action*, the accompanying phosphorus reduction agreement, and supporting phosphorus modeling studies. New York and Vermont will hold public meetings on this TMDL prior to submitting it to the EPA. EPA staff in Regions 1 and 2 are assisting Vermont and New York agencies with the preparation of the final TMDL as a joint Vermont/New York submission. The VT Department of Conservation will be preparing many more, smaller, TMDLs in the years ahead. The schedule for waters targeted for TMDL development over the next several years will be included in the VT Department of Conservation's final 1998 list of impaired waters.

But what about implementation? A TMDL is not a magic cure for an ailing waterbody. It's simply one more tool that, if properly implemented, should help us reach our water quality goals. Cleaning up Vermont's waters will still require public support and action, adequate funding, local watershed planning and protection, and continued implementation of point and nonpoint source pollution control measures.

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